

IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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THREE COUNTIES FALL SHORT IN DEER TISSUE COLLECTION EFFORT

DES MOINES – The Iowa DNR will continue collecting deer tissue samples in Allamakee, Jackson and Dubuque counties though the late muzzleloader season that ends Jan. 10. The three counties, along with Clayton County, were the focus of the tissue sample collection effort looking for the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Iowa deer.

To be as statistically accurate as possible, a minimum of 459 samples need to be collected in each of the counties. So far, only Clayton County has reached that level.

“What that does is gives us a 99 percent probability of detecting a 1 percent infection rate of the disease,” said Dale Garner, DNR wildlife biologist and state CWD expert. “We could use some additional samples, especially in Allamakee County.”

So far, the DNR has sent in tissue samples from nearly 500 deer that were killed on Iowa roadways or died as part of a captive herd. “We have results on about 200 of those samples and have not had one test positive,” Garner said. Results can take as much as three to six months.

“This whole process of taking a deer to a certain place and have the sample collected is new to Iowa hunters and, with anything new, there is an adjustment period,” he said. “We appreciate the cooperation from those hunters who either called us to come out to the field and collect a sample or stopped by the collection station.”

After the deer season ends, Garner and other DNR staff will look at the data results and discuss the next phase of the monitoring effort.

“I would guess we (DNR) will be collecting tissue samples during deer hunting seasons for the foreseeable future,” Garner said. “The health of the deer herd is important to Iowans.”

For more information, contact Garner at 515-281-7127.

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ANGLERS LOOKING NORTH FOR ICE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

DES MOINES – The warmer than usual weather over the past week has removed ice cover from a number of lakes and caused the remaining ice to be unsafe. Anglers should call their area DNR fisheries office or local bait shop for the latest information on ice conditions before heading out.

“The recent above normal temperatures have not been kind to ice anglers,” said Mick Klemesrud, spokesman for the DNR. “Clear Lake and Spirit Lake still have pretty good ice, but lakes just to the south, like Beeds Lake, have opened up substantially.”

Little Wall Lake, in southern Hamilton County, had up to 6 inches of ice as recently as last week, but is now about 40 percent open water. Even Rice Lake, in Worth and Winnebago counties, had areas with open water.

“That is a bit of a disappointment, especially around the holiday season when a lot of people have the time off and want to spend it ice fishing,” Klemesrud said. “Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and we’ll see good ice conditions return soon.”

The best scenario would be a number of clam nights and temperatures in the single digits. That would allow the lakes to freeze over again, and increase the ice thickness.

“The cold nights will add to the thickness of the remaining ice, but will also hide the areas that were previously open water. We always urge caution and safety when ice fishing and that is especially true now because anglers could be on 6 to 8 inches of ice one minute, and very little ice the next,” Klemesrud said.

Anglers should check the ice often by cutting test holes or by using a spud bar, carry some rope or other device that could be used to rescue someone. It would also be a good idea to wear a life jacket.

The Lumberman’s Association and other sources have tabulated ice strength figures and what load it can support, based on ice in good condition.

1 inch of ice – not safe;
2 inches of ice – one person on foot under good conditions;
3 inches of ice – group in single file or spread out;
4 inches of ice – general use;
5 inches of ice – snowmobiles;
7-1/2 inches of ice – car (2 ton gross);
8 inches of ice – light truck (2-1/2 ton gross);
10 inches of ice – medium truck (3-1/2 ton gross).

Blue ice is stronger than clear ice. Clear river ice is 15 percent weaker than clear lake ice. Use caution around clear or honeycombed ice and stay clear of dark spots in the ice.

For more information, contact Klemesrud at 515-281-8653.

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PLANS TO REPAIR DAM AT LACEY KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK FINALIZED

DES MOINES – The DNR has completed the plans to repair the break in the dam at Lacey Keosauqua State Park. The project will be released for bid on Jan. 22, 2003. Bids will be presented to the Natural Resource Commission for approval on Feb. 13, 2003. Construction will begin as soon as weather permits with a May 17, 2003 completion date.

For more information, contact Basil Nimry at 515-281-8686.

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NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO HOLD TELECONFERENCE DECEMBER 30

DES MOINES – The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet via teleconference at 11 a.m., Monday, Dec. 30, in the fourth floor conference room, Wallace State Office Bldg., in Des Moines. The meeting is open to the public.

Members of the NRC are Joan Schneider, Richard Garrels, Paul Christiansen, Carol Kramer, William Sullivan, Richard Francisco and Janice Marcantonio. The DNR Director is Jeffrey Vonk.

The following is the agenda for the December teleconference meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Request
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting – Jan. 9, Telephone Meeting, if needed

For more information, contact Karyn Stone at 515-281-8650.

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